Mowing

Most lawns especially the St. Augustine and the Bermudagrass lawns should be mowed once each week or 10 days, depending on the growth of the grass. It is not advisable to mow too closely as it will remove too much leaf surface and weaken the plants. The mower should be set to mow seven-eights inch to one inch from or above the surface runners. Never mow so close as to bruise the surface runners. By mid summer, the mower blades should be raised to a height of two inches.

Mowing encourages the horizontal growth or spread of lawn grasses, and discourages weed growth. If the mower is used regularly, it will usually be unnecessary to weed the lawn unless it has just started or to remove a very persistent weed. Chemical, handweeding, or both are necessary until the grass is large enough to mow and some weeding may be necessary later, depending on the kind of weeds present in the lawn.

Newly set or seeded lawns can be made to cover the ground much more quickly and satisfactorily if mowing is commenced just as soon as the grass has produced runners 10 to 15 inches in length.

Watering

Keeping lawns moist at all times is essential for best results in extremely dry and sandy areas.

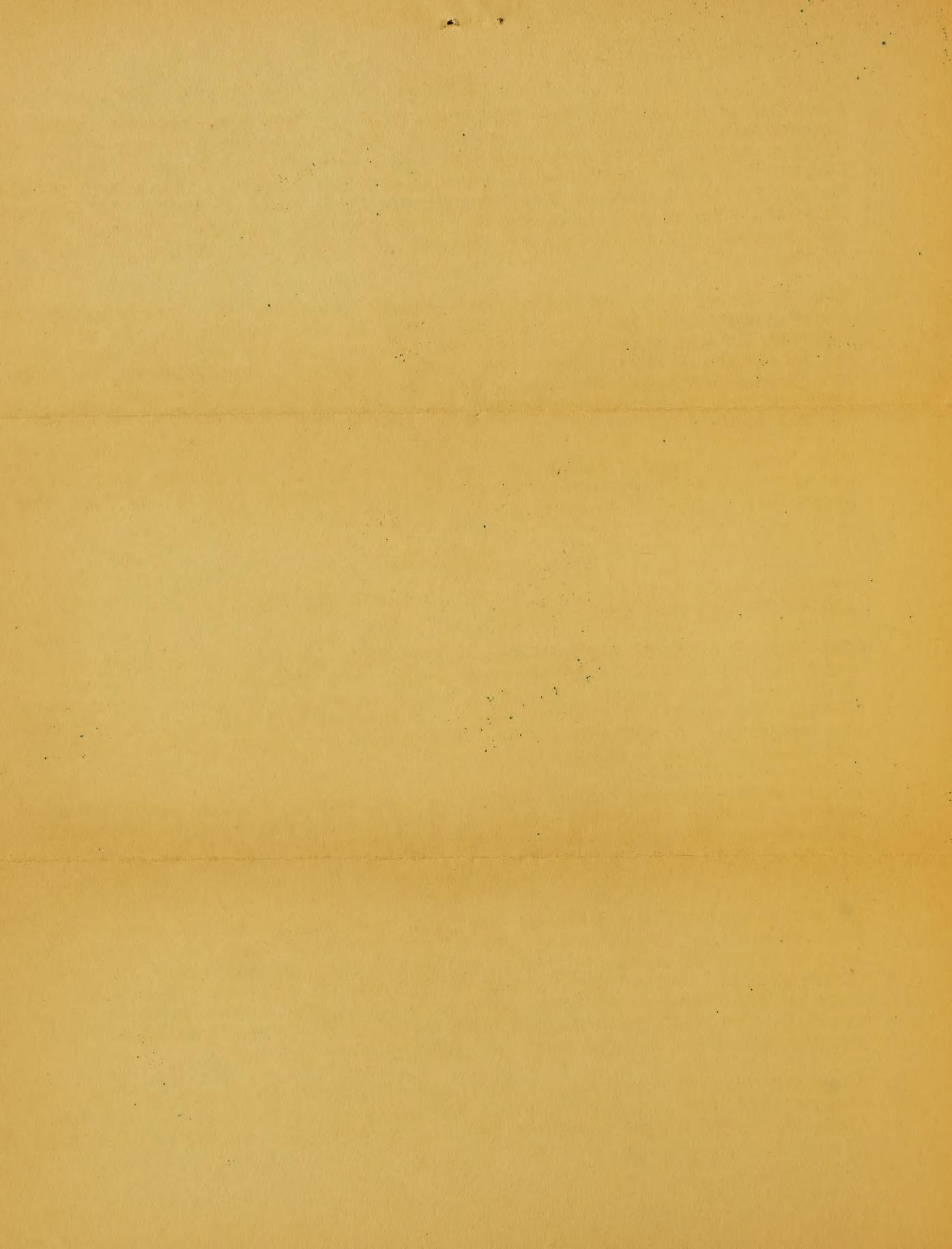
The lawn should be watered thoroughly each time it is watered, so that the soil will be moist to a depth of 6 inches as this favors deep root development. If only a light watering is given, frequently during dry spells the roots near the surface are stimulated, and when the watering is neglected for a few days, the grass suffers owing to the shallow root system.

A thorough watering twice a week is much better than a light watering daily. During the rainy seasons, very little watering is necessary to keep the grass in good growing condition.

Fertilizing

If the clippings are left on the lawn when the grass is mowed, and they should be, practically the only fertilizer that need be applied is some form of nitrogen, as very little else is lost from the soil under grass. One or two pounds of muriate or sulphate of potash and four or five pounds of superphosphate per 1,000 square feet of lawn applied once each year should take care of the requirements of the grass, but the nitrogen must be applied more often.

Nitrogen is very important. It keeps the grass vigorous and is also responsible for the dark green color that is so desirable. To take care of the nitrogen requirement, it is advisable to apply some good



nitrogen fertilizer at the rate of three to five pounds per 1,000 square feet of lawn about once each month. Good results have been obtained with sulphate of ammonia, nitrate of soda, urea, leuna-salpeter, cottonseed meal, castor meal, and activated sludge, and fair results from several others. Cottonseed meal, activated sludge and castor meal can be applied much heavier as they do not contain as high percent nitrogen as the other fertilizers mentioned and act more slowly. Mixtures of one of the last three mentioned with one of the inorganics named first give good results.

The inorganic acts quickly. The organic slowly. The mixture thus lasts longer making it unnecessary to fertilize the lawn so often. For example, a mixture of 1/4 sulphate of ammonia and 3/4 cottonseed meal applied at the rate of 10 pounds per 1,000 square feet of lawn should last two months or so, as indicated by the grass. When the dark green color begins to disappear, it is time to apply more nitrogen. A lawn should be thoroughly watered immediately after being top-dressed with commercial fertilizer, to prevent burning the grass.

If grass begins to look pale green in color, this is almost invariably a sign that nitrogen is needed. If the water and nitrogen requirements are satisfied, most lawn troubles are solved.

Top-Dressing With Soil

Along with the fertilizer program, the lawn should be top-dressed, that is, covered with 1/4 to 1/2 inch of good heavy soil, muck or manure about once each year. This covers the surface runners and stimulates growth by adding considerable plant food.

Many times bare or brown spots caused by washing away of the soil because of too abrupt a slope or improper watering, such as a dashed stream from a hose nozzle, can be made to grow quickly by judicious top soiling.

Uneven places in lawns can be gradually leveled up by frequent top-dressing, thus doing away with the scarifying or crowning of grass on uneven places on the lawn with the mower blade and its resultant bad effect on the growth of the grass.

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